

20 YEARS!

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Madame Mirage

Top Cow is best known for its dark fantasy series such as *Witchblade* and *The Darkness*—but Paul Dini is doing his part to add “superhero noir” to the mix.

Madame Mirage, Dini’s new book, doesn’t seem to fit the mold of the typical Top Cow series. “The book takes place in a world very much like our own, but one where the technology to create meta-humans, either through mechanical means or bio-manipulation, is a reality,” Dini said. “Or it *was* a reality, I should say, as that tech has all been outlawed.

“Turns out that power was way too tempting for most people to handle and it resulted in more villains being created than heroes. When a worldwide crackdown was initiated, the villains simply traded their costumes for business suits and formed a private company. Now called Aggressive Solutions International, this cabal of one-time villains sells their talents to anyone willing to meet their price. Kidnapping, terrorism, theft, murder—these guys do it all! Their only threat is the elusive Madame Mirage, who is somehow able to checkmate their every move and strike their agents down whenever they appear.

“Mirage is aided in her crusade by her younger sister, Harper Temple. In the eyes of the law they’d be criminals too, so the sis-

Millar, J. Michael Straczynski, Garth Ennis—the list goes on. We’re also currently working with video game writers and novelists.

“The bottom line for us is working with top notch talent and Paul Dini definitely fits that description. We first worked with Paul on the *Witchblade Animated* one-shot and had a great experience. Our former editor-in-chiefs Jim McLaughlin & Renae Geerlings and our president Matt Hawkins continued to stay in touch with Paul. Eventually, Jim inquired if Paul had any interest in doing a creator-generated title with us and lucky for us he had this idea—*Madame Mirage*—that had never fully materialized.”

“Top Cow has a history of books featuring strong, attractive heroines, and I felt *Mirage* would be a good fit with the likes of Lara Croft and Sara Pezzini,” Dini added.

While the name and the advance art led some to expect a crime noir saga, Dini said that *Madame Mirage* “is actually more superheroes, but with some of the trappings of film noir and hard-boiled detective

99¢ preview book, just in time for Free Comic Book Day. “Free Comic Book Day is one of the industry’s biggest events and wonderful event that gets more and more new readers into stores every year,” Sablik said. “We’ve always participated through Image Comics in FCBD and this year is no different with an original four-page story promoting our summer event *First Born* in Image’s FCBD title *Wolfman*. We had also planned to launch *Madame Mirage* in the spring with a preview book, as we had done with *Hunter-Killer* some years ago. So we figured why not time the release of *Madame Mirage First Look* so that retailers who want to dovetail the launch of *Madame Mirage* with FCBD can do so easily?”

Madame Mirage is illustrated by Kenneth Rocafort, who is no stranger to Top Cow fans. “Kenneth had been doing a book for them called *Hunter-Killer*, which is an amazing looking book. When his name came up as a possible artist, I thought he’d be absolutely perfect for it. His pencils on the first few issues have been nothing short of astonishing. He took what only existed in very rough drawings in my sketchbook and created a very cool and sexy world.”

With *Madame Mirage, Detective*, and the weekly series *Countdown* all filling up Dini’s agenda, he certainly seems to be one very busy fellow. Can he maintain a three-book schedule for a prolonged period, and does that leave him any time to work in television as well? “I like to stay busy, and I’m only just now embarking

Spotlighting a Mirage

ters must keep a low profile from both the villains and the Feds.”

Do Madame Mirage’s adversaries come from the world of corporate corruption and mob crime, or does she face off against a more traditional comic book rogues gallery? “Both,” Dini said. “In the world of *Madame Mirage*, most of the super-criminals have gone underground, trading their armored war-suits for more traditional business attire. This is their way of blending in with contemporary corporate America. However, now that Madame Mirage has called them out and has targeted each one of them for destruction, they are forced to once again take on the trappings of their early supervillain careers.”

Meta-humans... bio-engineering... a mysterious heroine... if all that sounds a little bit atypical for Top Cow, then you haven’t been paying attention to the diversification of that imprint, Vice President - Marketing & Sales Filip Sablik explained. “We’re looking to change what fans and retailers view as a ‘Top Cow creator’ or even a ‘Top Cow book.’ If you look at the writers we are currently working with, I think you’ll find quite a few established DC and Marvel guys, like Paul Jenkins, Mark Waid, and of course Ron Marz, who’s been pivotal in the direction of *Witchblade*. In the past we’ve worked with Mark

comics. I intended *Mirage*’s look to be rather timeless, and also kind of a throwback to characters like The Shadow. A lot of heroines these days have a more high-tech/militaristic look, which is cool, but I always intended *Mirage* to be a bit more unique and eye-catching.”

Is *Madame Mirage* an edgy, mature-readers book, or is targeted to a larger audience? “It’s edgy in the same way a PG-13 or R-rated movie is edgy,” Sablik said. “We’re definitely targeting more of Paul’s *Detective Comics* fan base than his *Jingle Belle* fans. Madame Mirage is a classic femme fatale, a strong female character who utilizes her looks to gain an advantage and distract her male opponents. That being said, I don’t think you’ll see anything in *Madame Mirage* that you couldn’t see at 9 pm on network television.”

“*Madame Mirage* falls more in line with my TV work on shows like *Lost*, and some screenplays I’ve written that only now are beginning to find their way into the production process,” Dini added. “*Mirage* contains that same darker, more adult edge, but with a fair amount of mystery and imagination.”

In an inspired bit of timing, Top Cow is releasing *Madame Mirage First Look*, the



on a new phase of my career where I will be debuting more and more new characters and concepts. Yes, it takes time to do it all, but I figured, what the hell—no time like the present!”

While *Madame Mirage* is an ongoing series, Dini is aware that his schedule is too full for him to commit to writing every issue. “We’re looking at doing several six-issue story arcs over the next couple of years. I’m writing the first two arcs myself, and from there on, as many more as time will allow.”

Madame Mirage First Look, a 99¢ comic featuring a preview story, behind-the-scenes info, art, and more, is scheduled for release this week. *Madame Mirage #1*, a \$2.99 comic that kicks off the ongoing series, follows in late May.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Wonder-ful News for Simone Fans

Last week, CSN told you about Gail Simone's departure from *Birds of Prey* for an unnamed project that she just couldn't pass up. This week, we can tell you that the project that lured her away from the *Birds* is none other than *Wonder Woman*, which Simone will take over with #13 (Jodi Picoult's story will continue through #10, and J. Torres is contributing a two-parter in #s 11 & 12).

Simone said that the opportunity to write DC's highest-profile superheroine came up rather suddenly. "Dan DiDio called me into his office when I visited New York City (and the DC offices) for the first time during the New York Comic Con... It might've been in Dan's head for some time, but it was pretty recent stuff on this end, which is great, because if I'd had to wait months before starting writing on it, I think I would have burst at the seams from excitement.

It's just a book I want to write. I'm dying to do it. When I first started in comics, it was the one book I really made it clear I didn't think I should take, partly because of fear of typecasting, but also because it's just such a huge, important character. The superheroine, not just in comics, but in all media, period.

But I got over the stage fright, and got to write her a few times, in *Birds of Prey* and *JLA: Classified*, and I realized, dammit, I love this character! I mean, it was just an amazing feeling. That feeling some writers get when they write Batman or whomever, that's me with Diana, except times ten and covered with sprinkles."

Was it difficult to give up *Birds of Prey*, even for an assignment like this? "Yeah, as recently as a few months ago, giving up *Birds of Prey* was simply inconceivable. I still feel I'm not completely done with

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those characters, as I just adore them. But *Birds of Prey* was a successful book before I came aboard and it will continue to be after I left. It's going to sound silly, but look at whose hands I'm leaving the book in, Sean McKeever & Nicola Scott. That is a killer combination.

"The thing is, after it really hit me that I was being offered *Wonder Woman*, I knew I'd have to leave a book, because I'm not doing Diana's stories in my spare time. This is getting everything I have. It can't be just another assignment. It has to be damn near a mission.

"Of all the books I do, I think *Wonder Woman* can have that same quality, that same allure for people who really have nothing against comics, but haven't yet found the doorway in.

"That's so ridiculously exciting to me. I know of so many people, men and women both, who love the Wonder Woman character, and are dying to read her book, but sometimes have a hard time getting past the baggage. That's one of the things Allan was fantastic at, I thought, presenting a compelling, very, very clean reality for someone new to jump aboard."

Is it important to have a woman writing *Wonder Woman*? Does gender matter? "No, I think most of the best *Wonder Woman* writers have been male; Greg Rucka, George Perez, and Phil Jimenez, just to name a few. Not to slight the small handful of females who have written here, they did great work as well.

"I don't know—maybe there's a bit of life experience that helps, or a different perspective, but I'm never inclined to pigeonhole by things like gender or race. I frankly would just as soon not worry about such things as a reader and a writer. It feels a bit antiquated, to my mind.

"When people talk to me about *Wonder Woman*, they seem to be talking about other things in my writing that they think will suit Diana, more than just the gender thing."

Is *Wonder Woman* a difficult character to write? "I just don't see it as 'difficult.' It's a joy, an honor, a pleasure, a thrill. It's exhilarating, is what it is. She's a dragon. She just kicks so much ass.

I think—and I mean this with affection—I think occasionally people have tried to burden her more with message than with character, and you know, when a writer tries that with Superman or Batman, they're instantly called on it. It's not the whole of the character. But it's a common approach with Diana...

"That just isn't what this book is going to be at all, to be frank. Look. It's simple, and it's never outdated. The book is about the best warrior planet Earth has ever known, and she happens to carry a mystical arsenal around just for the hell of it. If a writer can't make that interesting and fun, they really shouldn't be writing superheroes.

"There are layers upon layers of the character, and we'll get to them all. But let's just make it very clear that Diana is the premiere asskicker in the DCU, period. Batman and Superman have other things that make them special. Diana is the one who occasionally carries an axe if someone gives her lip.

"This is actually in my first issue, but the quote is, 'When a giant robot attacks Metropolis, send Superman. An alien attack? Get Green Lantern. When a car is hijacked by an escaped loony, turn on the bat signal, by all means. But if an army shows up on your doorstep, that's when you call in Wonder Woman.' Simple."

Readers have seen a variety of takes on *Wonder Woman* over the years—so how will Simone's take on the Amazon tie in to some of those earlier versions? "This is a great question. First, I hate the supposed 'dichotomy,' that she preaches peace while fighting. This is not contradictory at all. It's not 'a' or 'b,' it's 'a' and 'b.' It's like saying a cop is a hypocrite when they say they want to keep the peace, just because they might have to wrestle a perp to the ground on occasion. Diana's both. She loves the light, but she's right at home in the dark, too. She can do dark.

"I actually contacted a lot of my favorite *Wonder Woman* writers when I got the news. I knew very well in my heart what I wanted to do, but I wanted to share the wisdom of the people who got it right, as well. So I talked to the master, George Perez, I talked to the whipsmart Jodi Picoult, I talked with Phil Jimenez who has always been a terrific supporter. Greg Rucka was wonderfully gracious at the Emerald City con. And I talked at length with Allan Heinberg as well. Allan and Geoff Johns have

been harassing Dan to get me on the book for some time. It's been *Wonder Woman* 101 for me, in fact. These people all love Diana and are devoted to her, so their universal blessing is really nice.

"I had a direction and definite ideas about her character, but I think it's very important not to give readers whiplash, or New Direction Fever, as it's commonly called. I want people to be able to understand by page three of our issues who *Wonder Woman really is*, but there are echoes of all the great work that came before, in the background, as well."

Both Heinberg and Picoult have continued to give *Wonder Woman* a human identity in the person of Diana Prince. So why does she need a secret identity? "This was one element I had some resistance to, but eventually it hit me, that while we as readers may ask that exact question, if you look at it from Diana's point of view, it's a whole different question. She's someone who wants to understand people, yet really has spent most of her time up in the clouds.

"Plus, I'm telling you, Diana Prince as a secret agent in some of these first stories, it's just going to be hot. Way hotter than you might suspect, I think."

If there's one thing that Simone isn't enthusiastic about, it's *Wonder Woman's* rogues gallery. "I think she's got a handful of great villains, but needs a lot more. We're on that like cheese on a puff."

So who'll be handling the art honors when Simone takes over? "I can't say who it is yet. But if the readers all made a list of who the best possible *Wonder Woman* art team would be, I bet this would be the number one choice. It's that good."

Capcom Primo for Prima

Prima Games, a division of Random House (the same parent company responsible for the Del Rey graphic novel line), has landed a graphic novel deal of its own: they'll be the exclusive publishing source for graphic novels and other projects based on Capcom's videogames.

"Capcom has a great reputation for creating some of the most storied franchises in video game history," Debra Kempker, president of Prima Games, said. "We look forward to brining these franchises to video game fans through guides, comics, and other published works."

While strategy guides are a key part of the deal, comics fans will be most interested in the original graphic novels. Other publishing ventures include novelizations and calendars.

"By working with one of the largest trade publishers in the world, we are excited about the unlimited potential of our greatly expanded publishing program," Tommy Yoshida, vice president of licensing for Capcom Entertainment, Inc., said.

Capcom properties include *Resident Evil*, *Mega Man*, *Devil May Cry*, and *Shade*. Acclaimed comics writer Marv Wolfman will write the novelization and original graphic novel for *Shade*; no other creators have been named, but once they are, you'll hear about it in CSN.

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Coming Comics— Marvel in July

Will Spider-Man cross the line he swore never to cross? Now that Aunt May has been shot, he's not the same man he once was... as Wilson Fisk is about to discover in *Amazing Spider-Man* #543 by J. Michael Straczynski & Ron Garney.

May Parker confronts the reborn Carnage in *Amazing Spider-Girl* #10 by Tom DeFalco & Ron Frenz.

Annihilation: Conquest continues in July with the debut of three four-issue miniseries: *Starlord* by Keith Giffen & Timothy Green, *Wraith* by Javier Grillo-Marxuach & Kyle Hotz, and *Quasar* by Christos Gage & Mike Lilly.

The Superhuman Armed Forces are called out to confront the Hulk in *Avengers: The Initiative* #4 by Dan Slott & Stefano Caselli.

Wolverine's on the hunt for the mastermind behind Hydra's operations... but why is Deadpool protecting the object of Wolverine's interest? Find out in *Cable/Deadpool* #43 by Fabian Nicieza & Reilly Brown.

Captain America #25: *Director's Cut* features a new printing of Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting's death of Captain America tale, along with Brubaker's entire script and oodles of extras. Meanwhile, in *Captain America* #28, readers will meet the New Serpent Squad, led by the daughter of the Red Skull. As the world still reels from the tragic assassination of Captain America, the Skull and his minions begin to put their plans into motion. Meanwhile, as the Falcon and Nick Fury hunt for the Winter Soldier, Tony Stark gets a message from beyond the grave...

Tony Stark's Fifty-State Initiative comes to fruition with the introduction of a Los Angeles-based superteam in *The Champions* #1 by Matt Fraction & Barry Kitson. A team of Stark-branded and created super heroes, these young actors, athletes and models are infused with tremendous powers and even more tremendous fame, reborn as the Champions. The catch: you can be fired at any point along the way. And every inch of your life will be



subjected to intense public scrutiny. And if you survive all that for a whole year, you'll face mandatory retirement. And there's no guarantee you'll live to see that retirement. If you had one year to save the world, what would you do?

Re-experience *Civil War* on a monthly schedule with the release of *Civil War Chronicles*, a twelve-part series collecting *Civil War*, *Civil War: Front Line*, and key tie-ins.

Ed Brubaker & Michael Lark wrap up "to the Devil His Due" in *Daredevil* #99—and what a finale it is! At last, the villain who's been ripping Hell's Kitchen apart is revealed, as DD leaps into the fight of his life!

Deadpool meets the Great Lakes Initiative in *Deadpool/GLI Summer Fun Spectacular* by Dan Slott, Fabian Nicieza, and various illustrators. Together, they face off against hit-men, ninjas, and the power of the gods!

Tom DeFalco invites readers back into the near-future of *Spider-Girl* in the pages of *Fantastic Five*, a five-part series illustrated by Ron Lim. Doctor Doom is back,

possessing cosmic-like power and a thirst for revenge on Reed Richards and the Sub-Mariner!

Jack Power faces competition from a new kid in school... and his name is Franklin Richards. Watch competition turn to cooperation, though, when the FF and Power Pack team up to confront older bullies equipped with the Wizard's and the Trapster's bad-guy gear in *Fantastic Four & Power Pack*, a four-parter by Fred Van Lente & Gurihiru.

Johnny Blaze forces the Ghost Rider to confront the Hulk in *Ghost Rider* #13 by Daniel Way & Javier Saltares. So now that he's trying to save the innocent, who's going to step in to save Ghost Rider?

Marvel returns to the world of Halo with the four-part *Halo: Uprising* by Brian Bendis & Alex Maleev. Picking up from the conclusion of blockbuster video game Halo 2, the must-read issue reveals how the Master Chief, while onboard a hostile ship headed towards Earth, must wage a one-man war against Covenant forces!

Earthbound Amadeus Cho has put together a team of heroes ready to stand

alongside the Hulk. But what happens when these renegades come face-to-face with the Hulk's Warbound allies? Find out in *Incredible Hulk* #108 by Greg Pak & Carlo Pagulayan.

With Iron Man missing after his battle with the Hulk, S.H.I.E.L.D. is thrown into chaos! Acting Director "Dum Dum" Dugan has to decide whether to try to find Tony Stark, the man who's pushed S.H.I.E.L.D. in a direction he disagrees with...or whether to seize control and run things his way. See what he does in *Iron Man* #20 by Christos Gage & Butch Guice.

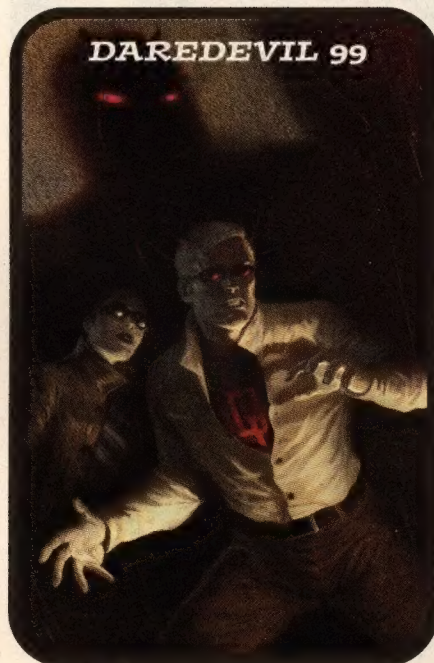
Ant-Man gets his opportunity to redeem himself as a hero in *Irredeemable Ant-Man* #10 by Robert Kirkman & Phil Hester. But will he actually face off against the Hulk... or will he do the wrong thing?

Laurell K. Hamilton joins co-writer Jonathan Green and artist Wellington Alves to present her first totally original comic book tale exploring Anita Blake's past. *Laurell K. Hamilton's Anita Blake—Vampire Hunter: The First Death*, a two-issue miniseries, takes place almost a year before the events currently featured in *Guilty Pleasures*. In its pages, readers will witness the first meeting of Anita and Jean-Claude, Anita's first time inside *Guilty Pleasures*, her first serial killer case, and a very early encounter with Edward.

The Marvel adventures line expands again with the addition of *Marvel Adventures Hulk*, an all-ages series starring the Green-Skinned Goliath. And all-ages fans will also want to check out *Giant Size Marvel Adventures: The Avengers*, an extra-length annual that features a story by Jeff Parker & Leonard Kirk guest-starring the Agents of ATLAS.

Marvel's line of classics adaptations continues with *Marvel Illustrated: The Man in the Iron Mask*, a six-part series by Roy Thomas & Hugo Petrus.

Iron Man has been destroyed, the Sentry's wife is murdered, nuclear missiles are being launched around the world and the one man with the plan to stop the new and improved Ultron is a god of war who's been an Avenger a total of five minutes. Sounds like *Mighty Avengers* #5 isn't



a high point in the team's career, huh? Don't worry, though: *Brian Bendis & Frank Cho* don't plan to end the series with this issue!...

M.O.D.O.K., Wonder Man and Ms. Marvel collide in *Ms. Marvel #17's* concluding installment of *Brian Reed & Aaron Lopresti's* three-part "Ready, AIM, Fire!" A traitor in Carol's crew is revealed—and two characters will die as a new super-villain is born!



Marvel's multi-part magic event continues in *Mystic Arcana: The Black Knight* by *Roy Thomas, David Sexton, Tom Grummett, & Eric Nguyen*. The fall of Camelot is near and the Old Magics are in danger of fading from existence. Merlin's only hope lies with Sir Percy of Scandia, the Black Knight! But will the cost be too great as Sir Percy duels with Mordred the Evil in the last, great battle of the era? And for those who want to get up to speed on Marvel's mystical heroes, there's the *Official Tarot of the Marvel Universe*, a guidebook to Marvel's magical characters, both good and evil.

The Avengers join forces with the Autobots in *New Avengers/Transformers #1* by *Stuart Moore & Tyler Kirkham*. War is about to break out on the border between Latveria and Symkaria -- unless two unique teams of heroes can unravel a dark mystery... that is, if they don't destroy each other first!

Someone is gift-wrapping super-villains for the police, defacing Superhuman Registration posters, and raising eyebrows from City Hall to Tony Stark's war chamber. And the only clue to their identity? Two spray-painted letters: N.W. Are the New Warriors really back? Find out in *New Warriors #2* by *Kevin Greivoux & Paco Medina*.

Find all you ever hoped to know about the world of *Powers* in *The Powers Encyclopedia Volume One*, a double-sized comic focusing on the good guys and bad guys who populate the *Brian Bendis-Michael Avon Oeming* series.

Eddie Brock is a man consumed—both figuratively and literally. By his cancer, by

demons real and imagined, by his past as the deadly villain Venom. But what does he have to do with Peter's efforts to communicate with a comatose Aunt May? Find out in *Sensational Spider-Man #39* by *Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Lee Weeks*.

Ever notice how in some Marvel comics, characters who are supposed to be dead show up with no explanation whatsoever? Or in the wrong costume? Or acting in a way they never have before? Well, *Dan Slott & Rick Burchett* reveal the reason for that in *She-Hulk #21*, an offbeat tale that Marvel promises will fix 90% of all continuity problems from now on...

The Affiliation, the group comprised of Roland's father and his forces, are being lured into a fatal trap in the Shavel Mountains. With the Old Ones' weapons fired up by Hambry's oil, the Affiliation will be wiped out—unless Roland Deschain can intercede in time! Witness a story of love and betrayal from the heart of Mid-World, in *Peter David, Robin Furth, Jae Lee, & Richard Isanove's Stephen King's*

Dark Tower: The Gunslinger Born #6.

Sick of being hounded by AIM, MODOK assembles an eclectic team of Marvel villains to pull off one last big score in *Super-Villains Team-Up: MODOK's 1 #1* by *Fred Van Lente & Francis Portela*. But news travels fast along the grapevine of villainy -- and pretty soon every bad guy in the Marvel Universe is gunning for the Big-Headed One's unspeakably powerful prize.

At long last, the Thunder God returns in *Thor #1* by *J. Michael Straczynski & Olivier Coipel*. Not a clone! Not a robot! Not an imaginary story! The God of Thunder is officially back! You've waited for it, you've demanded it... so here it is! But how does a god return from Ragnarok?

Norman Osborn has his own agenda when it comes to directing the Thunderbolts. But will he go too far when he sends Penance on what could be a suicide mission against the brutal, rogue law-enforcer, Americop? It's Thunderbolt

against Thunderbolt in *Thunderbolts: Desperate Measures* by *Paul Jenkins & Steve Lieber*.

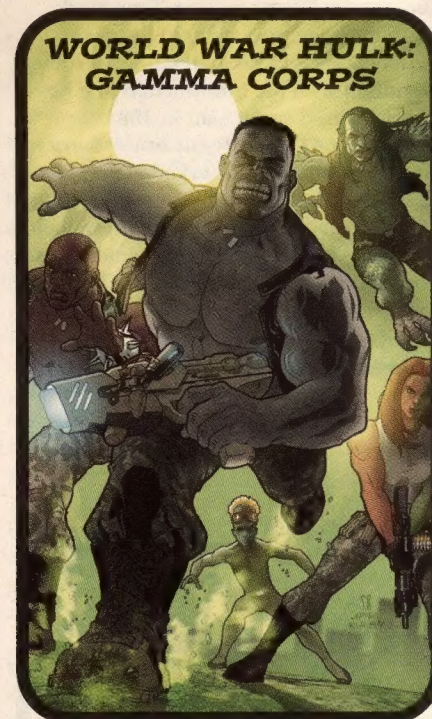
Mark Bagley bids farewell to Ultimate Spidey with the release of *Ultimate Spider-Man #111*. Bagley illustrates the first half of the story, in which Peter and Aunt May have the most important conversation of his life, while new illustrator *Stuart Immonen* illustrates the final segment of the story.

The X-Men are no more. Long live the X-Men! The man from the future, Bishop, assembles his own team of mutants, ready to carry on the legacy of Charles Xavier, in *Robert Kirkman & Yanick Paquette's Ultimate X-Men #84*. Their first task is to stop the attacks of the deadly Sentinels against their kind. And you'll never guess who's behind the attacks... or who the new Ultimate X-Men are!

It's time for the final round in Wolverine's decades-long grudge match with Sabretooth, courtesy of *Jeph Loeb & Simone Bianchi* -- and this time only one of them is walking away. Witness the mayhem in *Wolverine #55*.

Logan returns to Madripoor in *Wolverine: Origins Annual #1* by *Daniel Way & Kaare Andrews*.

Marvel fans have seen what gamma irradiation has done to such characters as the Hulk, the Abomination, the Leader, and Doc Samson. Now, meet the next generation of gamma-powered heroes in *World War Hulk: Gamma Corps* by *Frank Tieri & Carlos Ferreira*. Recruited and trained by the enigmatic General Ryker, their mission is a simple one: kill the Incredible Hulk.



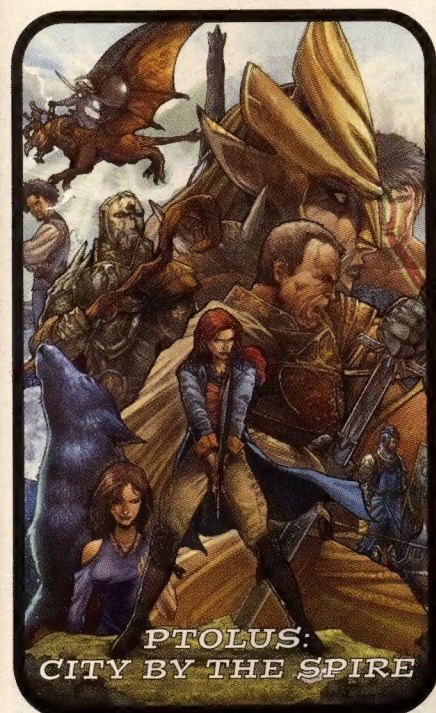
The Illuminati shot the Hulk into space... but now he's back, and he has his own super-team of Warbound gladiators ready to wreak vengeance on the Illuminati and the rest of the Earth in *World War Hulk #2* by *Greg Pak & John Romita Jr.* So with the Hulk worked up into a rage, what hope can She-Hulk have of calming down her great green cousin?

Paul Jenkins presents three separate
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tales in *World War Hulk: Front Line #2*. First, Ben Urich and Sally Floyd, now running their own newspaper, attempt to single-handedly cover a story that even the big boys can't. Then, costume division detective Danny Granville and the alien known as Korg race to figure out who killed one of Hulk's allies. Finally, Chris Moreno proves that the Hulk's invasion of Manhattan is actually something to laugh at!

Marvel collected editions include:

- **Captain America: War & Remembrance**, reprinting *Captain America* #s 247-255 by John Byrne and others;
- **Devil Dinosaur by Jack Kirby Omnibus HC**, reprinting all nine issues of the off-beat series starring the crimson carnivore and his sidekick Moonboy;
- **Essential Defenders Volume Three**, collecting *Defenders* #s 31-60 & *Annual* #1;
- **Essential Spider-Woman Volume Two**, collecting *Spider-Woman* #s 26-50, *Marvel Team-Up* #97, and *Uncanny X-Men* #148;
- **Exiles Volume Fifteen: Enemy of the Stars**, collecting *Exiles* #s 90-94;
- **Hulk Visionaries: Peter David Volume Four**, collecting *Incredible Hulk* #s 355-363 & *Marvel Comics Presents* #s 26 & 45;
- **The Hood**, a hardcover collection of the Brian K. Vaughan-Kyle Hotz six-part series that introduced Parker Robbins, the son of a soldier in the Kingpin's criminal empire;
- **Immortal Iron Fist Volume One: The Last Iron Fist Story**, a premiere hardcover reprinting the first six issues of the series plus the Iron Fist story from *Civil War: Choosing Sides*;
- **Invaders Classic Volume One**, collecting the 1970's *Invaders* #s 1-9, *Giant-Size Invaders* #1, & *Marvel Premiere* #s 29-30;
- **Marvel Masterworks: The Mighty Thor Volume Six**, reprinting Stan Lee-Jack Kirby classics from *Thor* #s 141-151;
- **Monte Cook's Ptolus: City by the Spire**, collecting the first six issues of the gaming-inspired series;



- **Moon Knight Volume One: The Bottom**, collecting *Moon Knight* #s 1-6;
- **Nextwave: Agents of HATE Volume Two: Comic Shop News**

I Kick Your Face, a hardcover collecting #s 7-12 of the Warren Ellis-Stuart Immonen series;

- **Squadron Supreme: Hyperion Vs. Nighthawk**, collecting the four-part series;
- **Ultimate X-Men Volume Seven**, an oversized hardcover collecting *Ultimate X-Men* #s 66-74 & *Annual* #2;
- **Uncanny X-Men: Rise & Fall of the Shi'Ar Empire**, an oversized hardcover collecting *Uncanny X-Men* #s 475-486;
- **Union Jack: London Falling**, collecting the Christos Gage-Mike Perkins miniseries;
- **Wonder Man: My Fair Super Hero**, collecting the five-part limited series;
- **X-Factor Volume Two: Life & Death Matters**, collecting *X-Factor* #s 7-12; and
- **X-Men: Phoenix—Warsong**, a hardcover collecting the five-part series.

Another Annual on the Horizon

A couple of months ago, CSN told you that the long-delayed Allan Heinberg-Terry Dodson *Wonder Woman* finale was being taken off the schedule for *Wonder Woman* #5 and moved to the as-yet-unscheduled *Wonder Woman Annual* #1, where it will see print once the story is finally finished.

Well, now a second long-delayed story is finding an *Annual* solution: Geoff Johns, Richard Donner, & Adam Kubert's "Last Son" arc in *Action Comics* is being taken off the regular schedule, and the finale will appear in *Action Comics Annual* #11 when it is finally ready.

On his MySpace page, Johns explained what was happening: "... Our 'Last Son' finale has been moved to *Action Comics Annual* #11 to accommodate Adam [Kubert]'s schedule and allow us to continue on with our *Action Comics* run.

"First things first: I haven't done any of the fill-ins because, beyond *Justice Society of America* and *Green Lantern*, I've leaped ahead on *Action Comics* and am already working on the last half of 2007 and into 2008. Kurt and I are totally in sync and have laid out the plans for 2007 and 2008 and it's always a pleasure to work with him in the same Superman-verse...

"This, quite frankly, allows us to move ahead and get our work on *Action Comics* coming out monthly with the stories we want to tell. Donner and I resume our *Action* run with Eric Powell's three issue arc "Escape from Bizarro World," which we're already working on. I've seen the first several pages and Eric is doing fantastic work.

"Immediately following that, I've also began working far ahead with the artist taking over the monthly reigns of *Action Comics*. He's unbelievably talented, you've seen his most recent work at Marvel, and he's it in for the long haul. Our first storyline will be announced very soon and springs forth from the *Justice League of America/Justice Society of America* crossover."

As a result of the changes, the next installment of the Johns-Donner-Kubert tale will appear in *Action Comics* #851, followed by a three-part *Countdown* tie-in storyline (and then, presumably, by the Eric Powell-illustrated arc.)



Coming Comics—DC in July

Another "country" joins the fight as a new, deadly opponent enters the fray in *Amazons Attack* #4 by Will Pfeifer & Pete Woods. While Batman and Catwoman devise a plan to get to the bottom of the chaos, Grace — the Outsiders' 6' 6" female powerhouse — is about to be visited by her past. And in the midst of all this, Supergirl and Wonder Girl have betrayed the heroes and armed forces. Their target: the President of the United States!

The Search for Ray Palmer continues in *The All-New Atom* #13 as the Atom finds himself with people who knew Palmer very well: the jungle-dwelling little people from *Sword of the Atom*!

Things heat up on a storm-tossed shipyard as Batman and the Black Canary hunt down the mystery man behind the murder of Dick Grayson's parents in *Frank Miller, Jim Lee, & Scott Williams' All Star Batman & Robin, The Boy Wonder* #6. And as it turns out, Black Canary isn't the only one of Gotham's fairer sex to be called to action by the Dark Knight's war on crime!

Heroes writer/producer Michael Green joins artists Denys Cowan & John Floyd for a *Batman Confidential* arc that sheds light on who the Joker was before he became the Joker...and how he and Batman crossed paths even before the day he was created.

Black Canary takes flight in a four-issue miniseries by Tony Bedard & Amilton Santos! In *Black Canary* #1, the League of Assassins tracks Black Canary to Star City in an effort to liberate the child, Sin, they believe to be the DCU's next greatest assassin. Luckily, Black Canary has other plans for Sin's abilities and future.

Every hero featured in the first four issues of Mark Waid, George Pérez, & Bob Wiacek's *Brave and the Bold* makes an appearance in *B&B* #5. All roads lead back to Earth for the final showdown over the Book of Destiny, whose possessor will

have the knowledge of all that has ever been or will be!

Countdown kicks into high gear as it enters its third month—and a lot of the action seems to focus on the long-missing Ray Palmer! Paul Dini and his super-team of creators (including Keith Giffen, Jimmy Palmiotti, Justin Gray, David Lopez, Sean McKeever, Carlos Magno, Adam Beechen, Dennis Calero, Tony Bedard, & Manual Garcia) take readers into the Nanoverse in *Countdown* #s 43-40 on a search for the missing Mr. Palmer, while Suicide Squad, the Penguin, and the Atom make their appearances.

The divergent origin tales of Oliver Queen are reconciled in *Green Arrow: Year One* by Andy Diggle & Jock, best known for their work on *The Losers*. Oliver Queen is a frivolous playboy with little care for anyone or anything — apparently even himself. But when he's double-crossed and marooned on a desert island he finds that he does care about something... justice!

The first chapter of Geoff Johns, Ivan Reis, & Oclair Albert's "Sinestro Corps" launches in *Green Lantern* #21. Sinestro's army of fear has gathered: Arkillo! Karu-Sil! The Cyborg-Superman! And hundreds more of the most terrifying villains the universe has ever seen! Hal Jordan has overcome great fear throughout his life, but what fear still lingers inside him? Parallax knows, and Hal's about to be reminded as he leads Earth's Green Lanterns on a life-or-death rescue mission in the middle of this war. Meanwhile, the Guardians of the Universe find dissent within their ranks as a bizarre prophecy is fulfilled. The attack continues in *Dave Gibbons, Patrick Gleason, & Prentis Rollins' Green Lantern Corps* #14 as Soranik finds a surprise waiting for her at home and Mogo is besieged by a new enemy.



Fabian Nicieza & Steve Uy present a stand-alone story starring Jakeem Thunder and the Thunderbolt in *JSA Classified* #28. Can a super hero be spread too thin, even when he has the powers of a magical genie at his disposal?

Gene Ha makes a guest-artist appearance in *Justice League of America* #11, joining writer Brad Meltzer for a stand-alone tale that begins when two JLAers are buried alive.

Citizen Steel is the focus of *Justice Society of America* #7. Geoff Johns & Dale Eaglesham reveal what happens when Nathan Heywood, the grandson of Commander Steel, awakens to find himself completely and utterly alone in a way he never thought possible? Changed into something far more bizarre than Dr. Mid-Nite could ever imagine?

The Vigilante returns in *Nightwing* #134 by Marv Wolfman, Jamal Igle, & Keith Champagne. He may currently control an international gang of murderers, but there was a time when Dick Grayson called him friend and mentor — and they both loved the same woman.



Joe Kelly ends his *Supergirl* run with #19's tale that pits Supergirl against Superman. Is the only way to save the universe to kill the Man of Steel?

Kurt Busiek, Rick Leonardi, & Ande Parks present a special *Countdown* Dossier Issue in *Superman* #665, revealing for the first time how Jimmy Olsen came to the *Daily Planet*. And hot on the heels of that story, Busiek and artists Brad Walker & John Livesay kick off a three-parter in *Action Comics* #852 that spotlights Jimmy Olsen's new role in the DCU. For years, he's been Superman's pal... but could he now become Superman's partner? More secrets of Jimmy's past are revealed in this issue, the Kryptonite Man makes trouble, and more in this issue that ties into *Countdown* #40.

Supergirl and Wonder Girl team up in *Teen Titans* #49, an *Amazons Attack* crossover—but whose side are they on?

DC collected editions include:

- **Batman: Secrets of the Batcave**, a collection featuring Batcave-focused tales published over sixty years of Dark Knight exploits;



- **Birds of Prey: Blood & Circuits**, collecting *Birds of Prey* #s 96-103;
- **Catwoman: It's Only a Movie**, collecting *Catwoman* #s 59-65;
- **DC/Top Cow: Crossover Classics**, featuring *The Darkness/Batman*, *The Darkness Superman*, *JLA/Cyberforce*, and *JLA/Witchblade*;
- **Elfquest Archives Volume Four**, a hardcover compilation of *Elfquest* #s 16-20, complete with all-new coloring and lettering;
- **The Flash: The Greatest Stories Ever Told**, featuring stories from *Flash Comics* #86 & 104, *Flash* #s 123, 155, 165, 179, *DC Special Series* #11, and *The Flash* v2 #91;
- **Justice Society of America Volume One: The Next Age**, a hardcover collection of *JSoA* #s 1-4;
- **Manhunter Volume 3: Origins**, collecting *Manhunter* #s 15-23;
- **Showcase Presents Adam Strange Volume One**, reprinting the interplanetary adventures of the zeta-beam-hopping hero from *Showcase* #s 17-19 and *Mystery in Space* #s 53-84;
- **Showcase Presents Wonder Woman Volume One**, collecting classic Robert Kanigher-Ross Andru-Mike Esposito tales from *Wonder Woman* #s 98-117;
- **Superman: The Death & Return of Superman Omnibus Hardcover**, a massive 784-page collection featuring *The Death of Superman*, *The Return of Superman*, portions of *World Without a Superman*, and forty pages of bonus material;
- **The Superman Chronicles Volume Three**, collecting the Superman tales from *Action* #s 21-25, *Superman* #4-5, and *New York World's Fair 1940*;
- **Tangent Comics Volume One**, collecting the offbeat reinvention of The Atom, Metal Men, the Flash, Green Lantern, and Sea Devils that was originally published a decade ago; and
- **Wonder Woman Archives Volume Five**, a hardcover collecting the Wonder Woman tales from *Sensation Comics* #s 33-40 and *Wonder Woman* #s 10-12.

Coming Comics— CMX/DC in August

A card game deals some surprises in Manami's life in *King of Cards* by Makoto Tateno. "Chaos" is a trading card game that is very popular at Manami's school. Trying to learn more about it herself, she purchases a beginner's set, only to discover that it contains "Sahgan, The Mighty Sorcerer," the rarest card in the game. Now every other player is out to win the card from her. But Sahgan himself begins to visit Manami in her dreams, offering her advice on how to win.

Coming Comics— WildStorm/DC in July

The sad, bloody saga of Jason Vorhees is well-chronicled, but one story element of his origin remains untold — that of his mother, Pamela Vorhees! But that story comes to light in *Friday the 13th: Pamela's Tale* by Marc Andreyko & Shawn Moll.



Peter Milligan & C.P. Smith join forces for *The Programme*, a twelve-issue series that offers its own distinctive take on the superhero concept. In 1991, the Cold War ended without the two primary players ever facing each other in direct conflict. The vast arsenals of democracy and communism were put on ice, and the world moved toward a new millennium. While the U.S.S.R. disintegrated, the United States rose to unchallenged dominance...but now a long-forgotten Soviet weapon is awakened on one of America's many battlegrounds, threatening the global balance of power. Conventional warfare is suddenly outdated: the new weapons of mass destruction wield super-powers. Does America have an answer to...The Programme?

Before "Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning," there was, Thomas Hewitt, a troubled teenager attempting to fit in with others his age, but Thomas harbored a dark secret — an overwhelming lust for

blood and violence that corrupted his soul. Witness the origin of one of horror's most famous figures in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: About a Boy* by Dan Abnett, Andy Lanning, & Joel Gomez.

WildStorm collected editions include:

- **Alan Moore: The Complete WildC.A.T.s**, collecting #s 21-34 plus the *Alan Moore* story from #50; and
- **Ninja Scroll**, collecting the first five issues of the anime-inspired series.

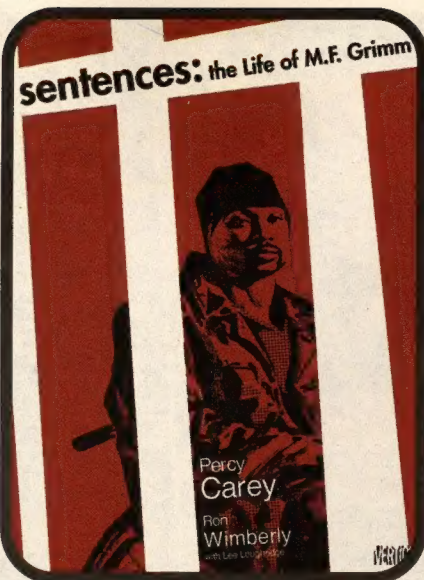


Coming Comics— Minx/DC in July

Derek Kirk Kim & Jess Hamm present the four faces of Grace in *Good As Lily*. Following a strange mishap on her 18th birthday, Grace Kwon is confronted with herself at three different periods in her life. The timing couldn't be worse as Grace and her friends desperately try to save a crumbling school play. Will her other selves wreak havoc on her present life or illuminate her uncertain future?



Sentences: the Life of M.F. Grimm



cheat and fake your way through almost anything. An the aftermath of a wild blowout, things start to go wrong for Jessie and her friends. Jessie is troubled by nasty memories she's been suppressing for years, while her best friend Nick Philo has become an un-person; Nobody outside their tight-knit little clique can remember seeing him before, and his records have been erased from the college's computers.

Vertigo collected editions include:

- **100 Bullets Volume 11: Once Upon a Crime**, collecting #s 76-83;
- **The Complete Bite Club**, collecting Howard Chaykin, David Tischman, & David Hahn's *Bite Club* and *Bite Club: Vampire Crime Unit*; and
- **Scalped Volume One: Indian Country**, collecting the first five issues of the edgy series in one bargain-priced volume.

Coming Comics—Vertigo/DC in July

Underground rapper Percy Carey joins artist Ronald Wimberly to tell the true story of his hip-hop career in *Sentences: The Life of M.F. Grimm*.

Mike Carey & Jock join forces for *Faker*, a story set during freshman year of college—the ultimate time of reinvention, where, if you're up for it, you can lie,

Coming in December from DC Direct

The world of Bill Willingham's *Fables* is the inspiration for the *Fables: Shere Khan & Rose Red Statue*. Mark Buckingham did the design work on the 9.5" tall piece, which is sculpted by Jim Maddox.

Terry Dodson's art is the inspiration for the first series of *Wonder Woman Action Figures*, featuring *Circe*, *Agent Diana*



Prince, *Wonder Woman*, and *Donna Troy as Wonder Woman*.

Return to Darwyn Cooke's proto-Silver Ages saga with the release of the *New Frontier Series 2 Action Figures*, which include *Batman*, *Flash*, *Dr. Fate*, and *Martian Manhunter*, all designed with that distinctive Darwyn Cooke look!

The *Superman S-Shield Neon Sign*, previously available only to retailers, can be the highlight of every collector's Christmas! This 20" tall by 27" wide neon piece sits on a metal base and ships in a no-frills box.

Kotobukiya brings two of DC's best-known heroines into the third dimension with the release of their *Catwoman Vinyl Statue* and *Supergirl Vinyl Statue*.

Brad Bird's designs are the inspiration for the *Iron Giant Statue*, which includes two pieces—the *Iron Giant's head and shoulders* and a separate hand with a miniature Hogarth attached.

DC's mass-market DC Unlimited adds to its *World of Warcraft* offerings with the release of the *Illidan Stormrage Deluxe Collector Figure*.

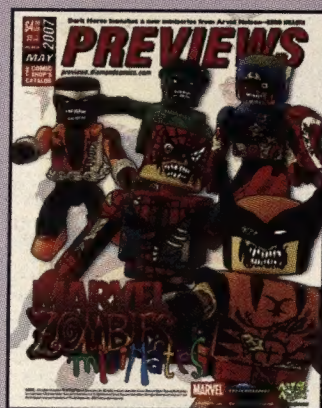


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580+ pages of cool stuff that starts shipping in July!

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Zero Killer #1—Arvid Nelson, the creator of *Rex Mundi*, presents his vision of a shattered alternate future, as brutal gangs struggle for supremacy in a New York City ravaged by nuclear war!



Green Arrow: Year One #1 & 2—The incredible creative team of writer Andy Diggle and artist Jock rejoin to tell the definitive origin of the Emerald Archer!



Silver Star #1—Jack "King" Kirby's *Silver Star* is collected in full-color at last! Featuring lovingly reconstructed color work, this deluxe hardcover is a must-have for any Kirby fan!

The Champions #1—Meet the all-new, LA.-based "crown jewel" in Tony Stark's 50-State Initiative: A team of Stark-branded and created superheroes, infused with tremendous powers — and even more tremendous fame — reborn as the First Superhero Team of Tomorrow!



AND BE SURE NOT TO MISS:

- **World of Warcraft: Illidan DLX Figure** from DC Unlimited!
- **Marvel Select: "Marvel Zombies" Hulk Figure** from Diamond Select Toys!
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